

HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER

Jacqueline Gottlieb, CEO and President

Our Mission: Inspired by Jesus Christ, Hinton Center serves individuals, congregations, and rural communities through retreat ministries, educational opportunities, and missional outreach.

In 2022, Hinton Rural Life Center served conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction by equipping clergy and local churches (particularly small, rural churches) and offering opportunities for individuals and church groups to serve in Safe and Healthy Home Repair and firewood ministries. Folks and groups also came for retreats and renewal time, experiencing God's presence and blessing at our 33-acre campus in the Appalachian Mountains. Here are some of the year's highlights:

- Launched Theotokos Confirmation Retreats, providing a United Methodist confirmation experience for 314 young people from 20 different churches. www.hintontheotokos.org;
- Developed and made available *Theotokos Connections*, a digital confirmation curriculum that is small church relevant but meaningful for all ministry settings. We received orders from 55 churches in 2022 and continue to receive orders;
- Provided 388 children living in poverty with new clothes at Christmas through Christmas Care;
- Entered our House on Wheels (HOW) mobile teaching unit in multiple parades and community resource events to promote home safety awareness and practices;
- Hosted 17 individuals participating in webinars for rural clergy;
- Facilitated poverty simulations for 550 people, helping those serving in missions to better understand the dynamics/challenges of rural poverty and what it means to "walk alongside" our neighbors in need;
- Completed 186 home repair projects on 48 different homes, prioritizing and addressing the health and safety of homeowners;
- Hosted over 725 mission participants. Mission team participants and local volunteers recorded 16,760 hours, a value of \$501,962 to our community;
- Provided over 700 loads of firewood to families/individuals who heat primarily with wood, a value of \$179,240;
- Trained 21 individuals in Mental Health First Aid online offerings, helping to remove stigma and create awareness of the signs and symptoms of mental health crises and best responses for connecting with help;
- Awarded \$1.8 million in grant dollars, with the majority of funds focused on our Safe and Healthy Homes initiatives. This will include the design and construction of an educational tool barn, where community members and mission volunteers can learn more about the direct connection between poor health and inadequate housing;
- And continued to provide mission and leadership training for young people through our Staffers-in-Training event, Summer Mission Outreach Service Ministry Leaders opportunity (for college-age summer staff), and the 12-week Leadership Chatuge Community Builders course, which is primarily for adults, but open to high school students. Clay County resident Lauren, one of the high school participants, was grateful for her experience: "This program has largely affected how I view business and economics. It gave me the opportunity to gain new connections with business owners. Also, it opened my eyes to all that our area has to offer in resources."